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Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza Announce Record High Graduation Rate, Record High College Enrollment

January 14, 2021

Graduation rate rises to 78.8 percent, increase of 10 percentage points since the start of the administration

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza today announced that New York City’s 2020 four-year high school graduation rate has reached a record high of 78.8 percent, with gains in every borough. The graduation rate has increased every year of this administration, and is up 10.3 percentage points since 2014. The number of students enrolling in a two or four-year college program, as well as a vocational or public service program after graduation, has also reached an all-time high of 62.8%.

“Our record-high graduation rate during a global pandemic is a testament to this administration’s unwavering commitment to equity and excellence for every child in every borough, said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I am confident our longstanding investments in education will continue to open doors for countless students to come.”

“No matter the circumstances, New York City students continue to make record progress and exceed our expectations,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. “In the middle of a pandemic, our graduation rates are up, dropout rates are down, and we continue to close the achievement gap in every borough. While critical work lies ahead, we celebrate our students, families and educators for their tremendous achievements, and most importantly today, honor our most recent graduates.”

Academic planning for juniors and seniors was top of mind during the transition of the nation’s largest school system to remote learning last spring. School counselors and college and career planning staff supported the Class of 2020 remotely. Schools worked hard to keep students on track toward graduation, supporting them on mastering courses, offering rigorous instruction and individualized postsecondary planning to prepare them for their next steps after completing high school.

The record-high graduation rate is a 1.5 percentage point increase compared to the previous year, among the cohort of all students who entered ninth grade in the fall of 2016, keeping the City on track to surpass the nation's graduation rate in the next five years, reaching 86 percent by 2026. The dropout rate has fallen to a record low of 5.8 percent, with a 2.0 point decrease from last year.

In tandem with these gains, we're seeing more students than ever go on to college and postsecondary education:

- The highest-ever college readiness rate – 57.7 percent of all students, and 72.5 percent of graduates, in the Class of 2020 graduated high school on time and met CUNY's standards for college readiness in English and math.
- A postsecondary enrollment rate of 63 percent. 48,968 students in the Class of 2019 enrolled in a two- or four-year college, vocational program, or public service program after graduation, up 8,107 students since the start of the administration.

Through College Access for All, every high school has resources and supports for students to graduate with a college and career plan. This has included eliminating the CUNY college application fee for low-income students. In the Class of 2019, 44,936 students redeemed fee waivers through CUNY, allowing them to apply for free.

Last spring in the height of COVID-19, the New York State Education Department canceled the June and August Regents Examinations, and announced emergency modifications to requirements for students to graduate and earn their high school diplomas amidst a global pandemic. Due to the cancelation of the exams, students who would have taken one or more Regents were exempted from passing the assessments in order to be issued a diploma, as long as they met certain eligibility requirements, including demonstrating proficiency and earning course credit in the course of study culminating in a Regents exam.

Earning a diploma is the culmination of four years of coursework and credit, and although the school year was interrupted, students had completed most of their requirements by March. Regents are not the only measure of success, and students earn credit for courses that don't culminate in a Regents examination. Approximately 7,950, or 13.5 percent of NYCDOE 2020 graduates used a State-offered Regents waiver to fulfill exam requirements for graduation, a lower percentage than the other four major school districts in the state. Each year, many of these students prepare for and take the Regents to keep them on track, and they move on to graduate.

This administration has made historic investments in working to close the achievement gap and put every student on the path to college and careers. We set students on a path to success early with 3-K and Pre-K For All, stronger early elementary school instruction, more rigorous coursework for middle and high schoolers, and more support for students and families throughout the school system. Computer Science for All brings 21st-century computer science instruction to every school, and AP for All expands access to high school students to be able to take at least five Advanced Placement courses.

Graduation rates improved across Asian, Black and Hispanic students, with a decrease in the gap between Black and White students and Hispanic and White students. The graduation rate was:

- 89.5 percent for Asian students, up 1.3 points since 2019, and up 6.9 points from 2014.
- 75.9 percent for Black students, up 2.1 points since 2019, and up 12.1 points from 2014.
- 74.1 percent for Hispanic students, up 2.1 points since 2019, and up 12.7 points from 2014.

- 83.8 percent for White students, down 1.2 points since 2019, and up 3.2 points from 2014.

The 4-year graduation rate increased and the dropout rate decreased across all five boroughs.

The largest improvement in graduation and dropout rates was in the Bronx:

	Graduation			
Borough	2020 # Cohort	% 2020 Grad	% 2019 Grad	Pt. Diff
Bronx	13605	73.0	70.2	+2.8
Brooklyn	20727	77.7	77.0	+0.8
Manhattan	15772	79.2	78.3	+0.9
Queens	19696	82.2	80.7	+1.5
Staten Island	4723	84.1	82.7	+1.4

	Dropout			
Borough	2020 # Cohort	% 2020 Dropout	% 2019 Dropout	Pt. Diff
Bronx	13605	9.3	12.7	-3.3
Brooklyn	20727	5.3	7.1	-1.8
Manhattan	15772	4.9	7.1	-2.2
Queens	19696	5.1	6.2	-1.1
Staten Island	4723	3.8	5.1	-1.2

The graduation rate for Ever English Language Learners (students who had been classified as ELLs and exited ELL status any year prior to school year of their last enrollment) increased by 1.3 percentage points, rising from 87.7 percent in 2019 to 89.0 percent in 2020. When looking just at Current English Language Learners (students who were identified as ELLs during the school year of their last enrollment), the graduation rate increased by 4.8 percentage points, from 40.9 percent in August 2019 to 45.7 percent in August 2020.

There were also gains among students with disabilities, with a 52.8 percent graduation rate in 2020, an increase of 12.3 percentage points since 2014.

“When our young people are educated our entire community wins! As a former college advisor for low income first generation students and a public school social worker, I’ve fought long and hard for young people to get through secondary education and have a path to higher learning,” said **Assembly Member Chantel Jackson**. “While we celebrate the increase in graduation rates we need to acknowledge the hard work of our families, educational staff, leadership and community based organizations who all work to elevate our students.”

“Rising graduation rates across the city are a testament to the investments the Mayor, Chancellor, school administrators and teachers have made to close the education gap,” said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**. “Students of color have faced educational inequities in our segregated school system for decades. The 12.1 percentage point graduation rate increase for Black students over

less than a decade is statistically significant and shows that we are on the right track. The dropout rate in Brooklyn also decreased by nearly 2 percentage points in the last year alone, despite the enormous struggles students and educators faced during the pandemic. I applaud the mayor and chancellor on a job well done and will continue working to make sure that the graduation rate keeps trending upward. Achieving educational equity is a cornerstone to achieving equity across the board."

More information on New York City's graduation results can be found online.

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